

Abstract

The Phenomenon of Presidential Elections. The development of the elections of Czechoslovak and Czech presidents 1918–2008.

The topic of this thesis is an analysis of the development of the elections of the president of Czechoslovakia and later the Czech Republic from 1918 to 2008 in the context of a distinctive understanding of the role of the president in the collective memory of the Czech nation.

The reason for the connection the analysis of presidential elections in the specified time period with the Czech experience of the perception of the president's role in the political system of the Czech Republic is the inseparable close link between the two topics within which the specific perception of a president in the eyes of Czech public influences the development of the institute of presidential elections and has the potential to successfully interpret it. The presidential election can therefore be considered a phenomenon within this meaning: it has specific historical, cultural and sociological features of the perception of the president's role in the collective memory of the Czech nation which were essential in the course of the functioning of the institute of the presidential election in Czech lands for further shaping of the form of this institute and these features have also made it a phenomenon which characterizes the past development and is able to explain it and also to foreshadow the future development.

The main aim of this thesis is to illustrate the phenomenon of the presidential elections using an analysis of individual elections of Czech or Czechoslovak presidents and also to provide answers for the sub-questions which directly arise from the introduce hypothesis, particularly: is it possible to find elements which interconnect the personalities of Czech or Czechoslovak presidents from the analysed presidential elections? Are the elections of the person elected as president more than once similar in a certain way? Has the importance of various aspects of presidential elections changed in time or has it stayed the same? What impact can an insufficient legislation have on the whole process of the presidential election?

The first chapter of this work is devoted to mapping the historical roots of presidential elections in the territory of the Czech state. The following chapters contain a vital part of the

work, i.e. the analysis of individual presidential elections. The analysis is performed on three levels. The first one outlines the relevant circumstances preceding the individual election which directly influenced its progress. The second level consists in the framing of the election within the legal framework and the evaluation of the legislation with regard to its complexity and potential (dis)continuity with the previous legislation. The third layer constitutes of the description of the progress of the election. The analysis also includes a mutual comparison of elections with regard to their progress, legislation and a possible impact they may have had on the next election. The third chapter consists of a summary of answers to questions asked in relation to the topic of the thesis.